

APPENDIX B

Teens Behind The Wheel

Risk Factors for Teens

Errant/Risky Driving. Errant/risky driving is the most common contributing factor in teen crashes.

- **Inattentiveness.** Driver inattention and distraction is a common contributing factor in multiple-vehicle crashes.
- **Excessive speed.** Illegal or unsafe speed is a common contributing factor in single vehicle crashes. Teens may have difficulty adjusting their speed to suit current driving conditions. Higher speeds reduce the time a driver has to recognize and react to hazards.
- **Driving with other teens.** The chance of a crash doubles with each passenger present in the vehicle.
- **Failure to wear a seat belt.** Wearing a seatbelt is the best way to reduce the chance of injury or death in a crash – and it's the law.
- **Being Inattentive at Intersections.** Most multi-vehicle crashes involving teens occur at intersections. Teen drivers need to be free from distractions and focused on other vehicles at intersections.
- **Use of alcohol or other drugs while driving.** While the percentage of teen drivers who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs is small, they account for a much higher percentage of serious injury and death from crashes involving all teen drivers.

Tips for Teen Drivers

- You and your passengers must always wear seat belts.
- Always adjust your seats and mirrors for the best visibility before starting each drive.
- Do not adjust your radio while you are driving. It is better to wait until you are stopped, because taking your focus off the road for even a few seconds could lead to a collision.
- Do not play music loudly. You might miss hearing a siren or a horn that could warn you of possible trouble.

Tips for Teen Drivers (continued)

- Do not talk on the phone or text while driving, it's against the law! Also, do not eat, comb your hair, put on make-up or do anything else that distracts you from the driving task.
- Do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol or ride with anyone who is under the influence. Even some over-the-counter drugs can make you drowsy.
- Before entering an intersection, make sure the intersection is clear before you proceed.
- Always obey all traffic signals. Always be prepared to stop as you approach an intersection with a green light in case the light changes. Unless you are already in an intersection when the light turns yellow, you should not enter the intersection after the light turns yellow.
- Obey the speed limit. Going too fast gives you less time to stop or react.

Tips for Parents of Teens

- When you drive, set a good example for your teen.
- Require seat belt use at all times.
- Take your teen practice driving with you while your teen has a learner's permit and during the first year of licensed driving.
- Expose your teen to different driving conditions, including wet roads, snow, highways, rural roads, night driving, etc.
- Practice on unfamiliar roads.
- Choose vehicles for safety, not image.
- Take the necessary time to discuss driving rules, responsibilities and consequences appropriate for your family.
- Develop a strategy for progressive privileges. As the teen driver gains experience and demonstrates appropriate decisions, allow your teen to "graduate" to a higher level of driving responsibility.
- Studies show that new drivers who are supervised have very few crashes. Developing necessary skills for safe driving is a complex task and can be learned only after many hours of practice. Driver education is a first step, but parents have a crucial role in teaching teens to drive.